United Nations S/PV.6422

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6422nd meeting
Friday, 12 November 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet
	Japan	Mr. Nishida
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onowu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2010/562)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-63455 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2010/562)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jeremić (Serbia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Zannier to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

It is so decided.

I invite Mrs. Çitaku to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/562, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Lamberto Zannier, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Zannier: The report before the members of the Council details the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from 16 July to 18 October 2010. Today, I wish to highlight the major challenges and successes of the reporting period, as well as the principal challenges that lie ahead and how we believe they can best be met.

There has been one major development since the publication of the report. On 2 November, the Assembly of Kosovo supported a no-confidence motion against the Government, and the Acting President issued a decree for early general elections, to be held on 12 December. Those developments follow the resignation of President Sejdiu and the collapse of the Government coalition on 18 October.

Since the issuance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, in July, there has been growing unease on the part of the Kosovo authorities in cooperating with UNMIK in two areas of our mandate implementation, namely, the facilitation of regional cooperation and the administration of northern Mitrovica. Although concerned that UNMIK's facilitation of their presence at regional forums undermines their declared sovereign status, Kosovo's institutions have so far continued to take part in most regional mechanisms in which their participation currently requires such facilitation.

Regrettably, however, during this reporting period they stopped participating in the Regional Cooperation Council. The Council deals with issues of importance for the development and long-term stability of the region — including those of economic and social development, energy and infrastructure and justice and home affairs — as well as cooperation in the security sector. By choosing not to participate during the reporting period, the Kosovo institutions lost valuable opportunities to benefit from regional cooperation on issues ranging from education to digital media. More opportunities will be lost should they decide not to re-engage with the Council.

While the choice to participate in such initiatives is one for the Kosovo authorities, we have steadfastly discouraged them from choosing the path of isolation. Kosovo's long-term stability and prosperity is inextricably linked with that of its neighbours. Participation in structures fostering regional cooperation is key to the development needed to ensure long-lasting peace in the region, and to the hope of a better future for its people. That is a common goal of both Pristina and Belgrade. The challenge has been, and remains, finding practical solutions to political obstacles.

With the requisite goodwill, Pristina and Belgrade can find such solutions. UNMIK will continue to provide its assistance and to propose practical ways to overcome political obstacles. But we believe that such solutions can be sought most effectively through a dialogue between the parties. In that regard, the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) presents an impending opportunity for Belgrade and Pristina to put politics aside in pursuit of a fundamental stepping stone towards the European perspective of the region. The Kosovo institutions have recently resumed attendance at CEFTA meetings, in spite of the continuing refusal of some CEFTA members to accept the new Kosovo customs stamps endorsed by UNMIK. That is a step in the right direction, and one that I hope signals that Pristina will ultimately choose to continue on the path of regional cooperation. I also hope that all CEFTA members will accept without further delay the Kosovo customs stamps endorsed by UNMIK.

During this reporting period, we also encountered a serious challenge to our management of the Administration of northern Mitrovica. The publication of an inaccurate report on the UNMIK Administration in Mitrovica (UAM) by the coordinator of the "Office for Implementation of the Strategy for the North of Kosovo", blaming the UAM for lack of progress in the implementation of the strategy, was followed by an intense media campaign against the UAM and, more worryingly, against my staff in northern Kosovo in their individual capacities. For my part, I swiftly and firmly took issue with the potential endangerment of my staff by their being singled out in the press, including immediate steps to ensure their safety.

While the Kosovo authorities have nevertheless continued to channel municipal funds to the UAM for the benefit of the inhabitants of northern Mitrovica, regrettably representatives of the Kosovo Albanian villages in northern Mitrovica and the Kosovo Albanian authorities at the municipal level have been reluctant to engage with us recently, making it more difficult for us to facilitate contacts between the communities.

Indeed, inter-ethnic relations in northern Kosovo appear to be deteriorating. While overall the situation remained stable during the reporting period, continuing incidents in northern Kosovo have highlighted the strong potential for instability there and the urgent need to address the issues that continue to create friction between the communities. Since the end date of the report, low-level interethnic incidents have persisted, and with them the danger of igniting wider-spread violence.

Our key challenge in northern Kosovo remains to mediate between the communities, as well as to serve as a bridge between northern Kosovo and the Pristina authorities. To improve our ability to meet this challenge in northern Mitrovica, we are reviewing the way the UAM operates in order to enhance its ability to serve as a link between the communities. To that effect, we are engaging with the European Union (EU) and other international partners in order to develop a shared understanding of the policies required to address the challenges in northern Kosovo. In addition, we are coordinating our actions with the United Nations Kosovo team, within the context of our recently completed Integrated Strategic Framework.

Nevertheless, our overall assessment is that the tensions in northern Kosovo and the attempt to scapegoat UNMIK for the lack of progress there are reminders of the pressing need for the dialogue called for by the General Assembly. We also believe that two other key issues regarding which progress is falling short of expectations — those of missing persons and returns — can also be most effectively addressed through dialogue between the parties. I am encouraged that the recent internal political events in Pristina have not created an obstacle to the preparations for the dialogue, and that the preparatory phase is under way in Brussels. For our part, we are working with the EU to provide the United Nations support and contribution to this important process.

There has been other encouraging news that I wish to highlight. On 1 October, in a coordinated action with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mercy Corps International and Roma and other residents of the Česmin Lug camp,

the UAM finally closed and sealed off the camp so that it cannot be reinhabited. With the support of the Mitrovica municipality, its former residents relocated to homes newly constructed by the United States Agency for International Development in the Roma Mahala area, or to Osterode camp to await the construction of additional homes funded by the EU. While not forgetting that the closure of Česmin Lug, with its unhealthy conditions, was too long delayed, I am heartened to finally be able to report concrete progress in the living conditions of some of Kosovo's Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian residents.

In that context, I must bring to the Council's attention the prospect of increased forced returns to Kosovo of Roma and other vulnerable groups, following the conclusion of readmission agreements between Kosovo and Western European Governments that host significantly large numbers of displaced persons from Kosovo. These returns, if unmanaged, will further strain Kosovo's already limited absorption capacity and increase the risk of secondary displacement and further marginalization. That has real potential to derail progress, not only in the overall returns process but in improving inter-ethnic relations and securing long-term stability in Kosovo. I therefore urge repatriating countries and the Kosovo authorities to ensure that those returns are managed prudently and do not result in a humanitarian crisis.

In conclusion, on behalf of all UNMIK staff, I wish to thank the Council for its support and to assure it that we will continue to perform UNMIK's mandated functions to the best of our ability. UNMIK will continue to offer its facilitation and good offices. We hope that both Belgrade and Pristina will take advantage of that offer. Our goal remains to consolidate the peace that the people of Kosovo and so many in the international community have worked so hard for so long to keep.

The President: I thank Mr. Zannier for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

Mr. Jeremić (Serbia): This afternoon, we meet again for a regular meeting of the Security Council on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMMIK) pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999). I welcome the presence of Special Representative Lamberto Zannier.

The United Nations remains an indispensable actor in the province. We believe that it is critical for all responsible stakeholders on the ground, together with the Security Council, to reaffirm support for UNMIK as a strong pillar of peace and stability. It is equally critical for stakeholders to fully cooperate with UNMIK at all times, including in the work it does at the municipal level through the UNMIK Administration in Mitrovica.

The status neutrality of the United Nations — and that of all organizations that operate under its overall authority, such as the Kosovo Force (KFOR), European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) — remains the only acceptable framework within which all of us can work together to improve the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnicity.

Serbia highly appreciates the unwavering commitment of the United Nations to maintaining the external representation function of UNMIK, which is its obligation under resolution 1244 (1999). However, we are deeply concerned by the fact that the province's ethnic Albanian authorities have actively resisted such a role by the United Nations of late, as the report under discussion points out. That situation is highly regrettable, for "should this policy continue over time, it might result in increasing isolation of Kosovo", to quote the report (S/2010/562, para. 54). We hope Pristina will come to embrace the more constructive approach offered by UNMIK and supported by this Council.

The report highlights the fact that there has been no significant change in the consistently low numbers of returns of internally displaced persons to the province — only 233 Kosovo Serbs in three months, to be exact, out of a total of 205,835 expelled since June 1999, according to figures from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In addition, the report refers to the 3 October enthronement of our Patriarch Irinej in the spiritual home and administrative centre of the Serbian Orthodox Church for the past eight centuries, the city of Peć. In his enthronement address to the faithful, His Holiness emphasized the importance of reconciliation when he said:

> "Appealing in this solemn moment from this sacred place with love and respect not only for

the Serbian Orthodox in Kosovo, but also for the honourable Albanian people and all other local inhabitants here, we invite them to peace and unity, always predicated upon divine and human justice".

For some, the words of His Holiness were overshadowed by the stoning of buses full of pilgrims on their way back from the holy site and by what today's report mentions in passing as "posters placed prior to the ceremony along the road to the Patriarchate depicting the Patriarch as a war criminal" (ibid., para. 49). The posters also portrayed the Patriarch as a demonic figure. That kind of incident can only serve to enflame the passions of extremists on both sides. It is deeply regrettable that no international or local officials condemned that act and that no investigation was carried out to uncover the perpetrators of that hate crime.

The report draws attention to continuing efforts by the authorities in Pristina to unilaterally alter the complex reality on the ground, especially in north Kosovo. It underlines the fact that the situation "has remained unstable, and tensions have grown" (ibid., para. 59). One event that triggered tensions, according to the report, was the insistence by the ethnic Albanians to try to alter the status quo in north Kosovo by authorizing a construction project without approval by the UNMIK Administration in Mitrovica.

Another event, according to the report, was the deployment of Kosovo Police Regional Operations Special Units to north Kosovo without agreement with EULEX. The unsanctioned act of sending those paramilitaries, the vast majority of whom are ethnic Albanians from south Kosovo, is perceived by the majority that lives in north Kosovo as a provocation and an incitement to violence.

During this reporting period, the authorities in Pristina unfortunately resorted to unilateral action against Serbian targets in other parts of the province as well. For example, in late September, armed teams of ethnic Albanians brought down Serbia Telecom's mobile and fixed telephony network in south Kosovo, including equipment located in isolated enclaves and monastic communities. Aside from the significant material damage that resulted, the destruction of that network immediately affected approximately 100,000 south Kosovo Serbs, disrupting their ability to communicate beyond their enclaves. That is a serious breach of contemporary humanitarian norms.

As the report underscores, that carefully orchestrated operation disrupted the normal functioning of several licensed Kosovo Serb media outlets. It also affected access to emergency services, with hospital officials in Gračanica ascribing several fatalities to the inability of patients to call for help.

The report informs us that the ethnic Albanian authorities in Pristina called their elections, which, according to news reports, may take place next month. Unfortunately, those elections are not being held in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). Since the Special Representative of the Secretary-General did not call them, the OSCE will not monitor them and the United Nations will not certify them. Under such circumstances, it is plainly impossible for the Government of Serbia to invite any of our citizens to participate in them.

The world has supported by acclamation the fact that dialogue is the only road to peace in Kosovo — the only way both dignity and stability can be delivered to Serbs and Albanians alike.

The European Union's facilitation role and its capacity to act as an honest broker could play a decisive role in moving us towards a new, more promising moment. We hope that our differences may now be readdressed in less adversarial circumstances. For us, the dialogue means negotiating and being open to compromise. It is about overcoming prejudices and taming passions.

A fair and balanced process could become the catalyst for harnessing the forces of moderation — an instrument for those seeking to rebuild bridges and begin reconciliation in earnest. It could also provide a critical boost to securing a peaceful European future for the entire Western Balkans. Serbia wants this dialogue to begin as soon as possible, and we expect it to focus on the least controversial issues first. Early successes should be able to be leveraged as a way to build momentum for further achievements when we proceed to other, more delicate topics.

The journey to creative solutions will require political imagination, respect for our democracy and great skill. We hope we can enter a phase in which all parties will leave behind anachronistic analyses and diplomatic ambushes and instead concentrate on the task at hand.

Serbia has always maintained that Pristina's attempt to secede unilaterally is a violation of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as of resolution 1244 (1999). Our principled position, enshrined in our Constitution, remains unchanged: we shall not recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, explicitly or implicitly. As we would for any other place in the world, we believe there can never be a sustainable solution to an issue of such magnitude without the consent of all stakeholders.

We hold the firm view that the continued pursuit of recognitions of the unilateral declaration of independence is futile and counterproductive. Everyone who wanted to make a point has already made it, and we still do not have a settlement. A vast majority of States Members of the United Nations have refrained from recognizing the unilateral declaration of independence. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, allow me once again to sincerely thank those countries for their support and solidarity. We appeal to them to stay the course throughout the dialogue process.

We believe it is critically important that no impediments be placed on the road the stakeholders have committed to take. It would be equally harmful if someone tried to alter realities on the ground while discussions are under way. Any attempt to change those realities unilaterally or through the use of force would dramatically, and perhaps fatally, undermine the dialogue.

That is one of the many reasons why the reporting function of the United Nations remains indispensable. Serbia welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to report all developments in the dialogue to the Security Council. Its centrality and leading role in determining and providing legitimacy to a comprehensive settlement remains paramount in accordance with its resolution 1244 (1999) and the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security assigned to it by the United Nations Charter.

No one in this Chamber should doubt our readiness to be a true partner in forging a transformative peace. But we cannot do so alone, for in the twenty-first century no side can ever triumph by demanding unilateral concessions or seeking to maximize narrowly conceived objectives. Win-win solutions are impossible to find with zero-sum attitudes. Serbia, for its part, will spare no effort; we will neither tire nor lose our nerve. Without denying either the good or the ills of the past, we shall confidently continue to pursue our vision of the future.

Out of respect for our ancestors — but even more because of the generations that will follow — we shall leave no stone unturned in our quest to achieve a legitimate compromise. But this we shall seek not out of fear or under duress. Rather, we shall do so on the basis of our belief that, if we act together in good faith, we can finally transform that plot of land, so rich in history and dear to both peoples, from one of contention to one of harmony.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Çitaku.

Mrs. Çitaku: It is an honour for me to address the Council during a period of paramount importance for the establishment of long-term prospects for peace and prosperity not only in the Republic of Kosovo, but also in the rest of the Balkans.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for their efforts deployed in Kosovo during the period under review. These efforts, in the context of broader assistance from the International community, have contributed to stabilizing our region after the dreadful wars of the 1990s and to building democratic institutions in Kosovo.

We continue to pledge our unreserved support to all efforts to build peace and security in the Western Balkans, and we are happy to report that these continued efforts of the international community have been brought to fruition. After the atrocities committed by the regime of Slobodan Milošević in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, the independence of the Republic of Kosovo has brought lasting peace and stability and a brought the new European integration agenda to the forefront.

Today in the Balkans, all States are governed by democratically elected Governments, yet we all face similar transitional challenges and support is still needed to help us overcome the last obstacles to becoming full members of the European Union.

I am particularly pleased to address the Security Council at a time when developments in the Republic of Kosovo reflect the significant progress achieved in

building strong democratic institutions and sound constitutional framework.

In September, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that the President of the Republic could not exercise the function of President of Kosovo while maintaining the leadership of his political party. President Sejdiu, in honouring the decision of the Court, resigned. Following a vote of no-confidence, Parliament was dissolved and extraordinary elections are scheduled for 12 December. As on previous occasions, the December elections will be fair and free, and will reflect the will of Kosovo's citizens. The Government has called for and welcomes international observers for these elections. The recent political developments in the Republic of Kosovo proved yet again the political maturity of our established democratic system. Throughout this period, the Constitution and parliamentary rules and procedures were strictly followed and observed.

Kosovo is a multi-ethnic society and its Government remains fully committed to the greater social, political and economic inclusion of minorities in the mainstream of Kosovo society. In our most recent address to the Council (see S/PV.6367), we reported that all minorities, including Kosovar Serbs, have taken an increased interest in participating in democratic processes and local elections. We are in the process of completing the entire decentralization plan of President Ahtisaari, which guarantees unprecedented legal protection and affirmative rights to minorities.

All minorities, including Kosovar Serbs, enjoy direct and undisputed benefits by participating in the democratic life of the State they live in. This is more imperative in the view of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Therefore, we consider that this is the best time for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the stability of Kosovo by calling on Kosovar Serbs to participate in forthcoming elections and on the Serbian Government not to obstruct their participation in the elections.

New Serbian municipalities in Kosovo recorded the participation of over 50 per cent of local Serbs in the most recent local elections. Regrettably, the same does not hold true for the North of Kosovo, where the influence of Belgrade is still preventing the process of integration into Kosovo's public and institutional life. It is with great regret that I report that, over the past three months, there have been more than five armed attacks in the North of Kosovo against Kosovar Serbs who had decided to participate in Kosovo's public and political life. We have noted that these developments still go unreported in Serbia.

Having said that, we are proud to report that Kosovo Serbs and other minorities have now submitted over 20 electoral lists for the upcoming elections, and we are pleased that members of civil society, as well as several parliamentary parties in Serbia, are asking for a change of the Serbian Government policy to boycott everything representing the Republic of Kosovo, even after the International Court of Justice concluded that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law.

While local constitutional and political developments have occupied the minds of local and international actors, as well as the agenda of our State institutions, other positive developments have been recorded in regard to the process of the formal recognition of Kosovo's independence. Seventy-one countries have now recognized Kosovo, and over 100 Members of the United Nations are now recognizing Kosovo's documents. However, we regret that the Government of Serbia completely ignores and does not recognize any document issued by the Republic of Kosovo. Our license plates, customs stamps, passports, school diplomas and bank statements are recognized by the entire European Union (EU), and even by those countries that have not yet formally recognized our independence, but are not recognized by Serbia. This policy not only hampers student exchanges, family visits, normal trade and business relations, but also prevents and delays the reconciliation process among our peoples.

We are also glad to report positive progress in terms of the return process. By the end of this year, we expect a record 1,300 returnees, a process facilitated greatly by our Government jointly with United Nations agencies and donors. We are aware that more needs to be done, and we are fully committed to successfully completing this process. But while we continue to maintain a welcoming policy for all Kosovo citizens who want to return to their homes, we wish to remind the Council that, if we are to achieve tangible progress, we need the support of our partners in Belgrade. Again, I would like to emphasize that the active participation of the Serb minority in the upcoming elections will be crucial for them, as it will ensure further integration,

which will translate into more opportunities, stronger representation and increased living standards.

Religious freedoms and dialogue have been further strengthened, and the best examples of this are the successful organization of the enthronement of the Serbian Patriarch in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, the opening of a new Catholic cathedral in central Pristina, and the increased efforts to improve communication among all communities and religions.

The Kosovo Police have done a great job in securing Kosovo's religious sites following the departure of the International Security Force in Kosovo. While we regret the incidents that have occurred in some locations, we will respectfully point out that these isolated incidents have been mostly of a non-ethnic nature.

The most important development that strengthened our young country unfolded here in New York. After the International Court of Justice issued an opinion on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence, in September we regretfully witnessed another Serbian attempt in the General Assembly to call for negotiations on the status of Kosovo. Considering that Kosovo's independence and borders cannot be subject to any negotiation and that such a controversial proposal would undermine the progress achieved so far, the international community mobilized in an unprecedented manner and called on Serbia to change its policy. As a result, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/298, welcoming with respect the opinion of the Court. It also welcomes the readiness of the EU to facilitate a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade.

I am confirming yet again that our Government was very pleased with the outcome of that General Assembly debate. The resolution gives us a platform to start a technical dialogue with Serbia on issues of importance for the well-being of communities and for regional cooperation. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo and the principal international sponsors of the resolution have made it clear that the dialogue is about the future and not the past. We will not return to closed chapters of history. We are ready to talk about missing persons from the war, cooperation against crime and corruption, mutual recognition of documents and phone networks, rail lines, airspace and every other issue of mutual interest to and shared benefit for our citizens, our societies and our countries. But let me be clear. We will not talk — ever again — about Kosovo's right to exist as a free nation after everything that has happened in the past. The independence of Kosovo is not and will not be an issue for discussion.

Hence, following a round of discussions with the European Union and other partners, we are preparing our teams and agenda for talks with the Republic of Serbia, with the facilitation of the EU. We welcome the readiness of the United States to contribute to this process.

Let me conclude my remarks with the plea of 19-year-old Majlinda Kelmendi, who is the most honoured sportswoman of Kosovo today. She has won European and world championships in judo, one of the few Olympic sports that recognize her right to compete as a Kosovar. Unfortunately, even after more than 20 years, Kosovo's young athletes and artists remain isolated from such international activities. It is of great importance that Majlinda and other young Kosovars have the same opportunities as their friends throughout the world.

Enormous challenges remain for young generations of Kosovars and Serbs in the years ahead and many issues will have to be resolved through dialogue, but I believe that I am not the only one who acknowledges that after the Vienna process, the Ahtisaari proposal, the International Court of Justice opinion and the General Assembly resolution, we are finally ready to move on.

The President: I thank Mrs. Çitaku for her statement.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Jeremić of Serbia and Acting Foreign Minister Çitaku of Kosovo to the Council and to thank them for their comments. Let me also thank Special Representative Zannier for his briefing and his service.

I have three points to make today. First, as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently said in Pristina, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice turned the page on questions of Kosovo's status. In the words of the Court, "the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate general international law". The International Court of Justice opinion also stated that the declaration was not

in violation of resolution 1244 (1999). It is now time to move ahead.

For this reason, the United States welcomed the consensus General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September, which points to a new era of pragmatic, neighbourly relations between Serbia and Kosovo as they embark on their respective paths towards a Euro-Atlantic future. We welcome and support the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. It will help both countries improve the quality of life for their citizens and increase security and stability in the region.

Let us be clear. This dialogue is not about Kosovo's status or territorial integrity. Kosovo is a sovereign, independent State and its borders are inviolable. Seventy-one countries have now recognized Kosovo. We call upon States that have not already done so to help contribute to stability in the region by welcoming Kosovo into the international community through formal recognition.

Secondly, we must support the Government of Kosovo in its efforts to build a multi-ethnic and unified democratic State governed by the rule of law, accountable to all of its citizens and fully integrated into the international community. Kosovo has already made strides in increasing overall security, building a culture of inclusive democracy and strengthening the rule of law, but a great deal more remains to be done. The United States looks forward to free, fair and peaceful general elections in December as Kosovo builds on its encouraging track record in developing a vibrant multiparty democracy.

We stand ready to support Kosovo's efforts to administer the elections in a manner that lets all of the people of Kosovo exercise their right to vote. Now is the time for all citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic background, to make their voices heard in the democratic process. We regret that the Government of Serbia has missed the opportunity to play a constructive role in the process and has not encouraged Kosovo Serb participation. The Kosovo Serb community can only be disadvantaged by this decision.

Strong economic growth rooted in the rule of law is key to ensuring the long-term prosperity and security of the Balkans. We encourage Kosovo to create the conditions needed for sustainable, private sector-led growth by aggressively pursuing judicial reforms and tackling crime and corruption. Kosovo's continued cooperation with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is critical here. Kosovo's entry into the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank last year and, we hope, its eventual entry into other regional and multilateral institutions, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, will help promote reforms that ultimately benefit the people of Kosovo. We encourage all of our fellow Member States to support Kosovo's full participation in international forums, including the Central European Free Trade Agreement.

We also support the Government of Kosovo's efforts to responsibly enforce its laws, including recent measures taken by the Kosovo Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. Authorities in Kosovo and Serbia must work together to promote commercial activity in the telecommunications and energy sectors while respecting Kosovo law to meet the genuine needs of Kosovo's communities.

Further, the North Atlantic Council's recent decision to continue downsizing the Kosovo Force (KFOR) reflects improvements in the security situation and the professionalism of Kosovo's security forces. The two Governments' cooperative approach to the installation of the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church last month in Pejë further contributed to security and stability, in keeping with the shared responsibility to protect and preserve the vital role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo.

That brings me to my third and final point. As the report (S/2010/562) makes clear, many challenges remain in northern Kosovo. We strongly condemn acts and threats of violence, including those reported against ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo that are intended to intimidate those who would engage with Kosovo's legitimate institutions. Such attacks exacerbate divisions and undermine security. We welcome the support by EULEX of the Kosovo police's efforts to improve respect for the rule of law in northern Kosovo and we call on authorities in Pristina and Belgrade to support and contribute to those efforts.

The United States will continue to support Kosovo as it works to build a stable, prosperous and democratic country that is at peace with its neighbours and more and more integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community. Similarly, we will continue to support the aspirations of Serbia and all the countries of the

Western Balkans to achieve their goals for European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): I would like to welcome Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Foreign Minister of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Foreign Minister of Kosovo, and thank them for their statements. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for his presentation of the report before us (S/2010/562). We very much appreciate the work the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) is doing to promote dialogue and cooperation among all parties in order to promote stability and reconciliation.

Austria welcomes the fact that the security situation in Kosovo has been largely calm during the reporting period. However, we have again witnessed how recent developments have managed to increase political tensions in northern Kosovo and have in some instances triggered isolated acts of violence.

It is our firm conviction that the gradual integration of the north into the rest of Kosovo would be beneficial to all its inhabitants. At the same time, we are convinced that that goal will be achieved only through dialogue. Austria calls on all sides to exercise restraint, to adopt a constructive and pragmatic approach and to actively engage with the international presence, including in northern Kosovo, in order to avoid further violence and tension.

Kosovo police, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) have again demonstrated effective cooperation and have succeeded in tackling violence and ensuring stability. Austria continues to fully support the important work of the KFOR and EULEX and will continue to keep up its commitment in both these missions.

As it was pointed out in the recent progress report of the European Commission, many challenges persist. Improving governance and the rule of law in Kosovo, for example, is essential, as are steps to fight corruption and impunity. We commend the efforts by the Government of Kosovo towards those ends.

In order to make further progress and consolidate the gains made so far, it is important for the international community to remain engaged in Kosovo and to assist the local authorities by sharing expertise and resources. Kosovo must remain committed to carrying out the necessary reforms. Stability, security, the rule of law and governance are fundamental pillars for all of Kosovo's communities.

In that respect, Austria encourages all sides to reach an agreement on a multi-ethnic court in Mitrovica and on customs arrangements in the north. We welcome the efforts undertaken by EULEX in that regard.

Austria would also like to highlight the valuable contributions made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo in the monitoring, protection and promotion of human rights, including community rights, as well as the Mission's endeavours to improve conditions for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Likewise, Austria commends the OSCE Mission in Kosovo for the continuous support to the development of democratic institutions, such as the assistance offered to the Central Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints and Appeals Subcommission.

We hope that all ethnic groups in Kosovo will actively participate in the upcoming elections in December, as they will be decisive for the future of Kosovo. We hope that those elections will result in an encouraging signal for the future of all inhabitants of Kosovo. We appeal to both Kosovo and Serbia to exercise pragmatism and self-restraint in order to make the elections a success and to avoid increased tensions, particularly in the north.

Austria welcomes the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly, on 9 September, of a resolution on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice delivered on 22 July (resolution 64/298). We welcome, in particular, that that resolution was based on agreement between Serbia and the European Union. As others have already said, there is general agreement, as we have seen in the General Assembly, on the role of the European Union in facilitating a process of dialogue between the parties.

We are encouraged by signals from both sides showing their readiness to engage in a dialogue facilitated by the European Union on practical problems affecting the daily lives of people from both ethnic backgrounds living in Kosovo. I was also encouraged by what I heard from Foreign Minister Jeremić on this subject and pleased that Deputy Foreign Minister Çitaku told us about the Government of Kosovo getting ready to participate in this process.

This is an important opportunity to promote cooperation, to achieve progress, as the resolution says, on the path to the European Union, and to improve the lives of the people. We hope for an early launch of this dialogue, which can contribute to creating the conditions for a shared future within the European Union. That is a goal to which Austria has always been committed, and we stand ready to continue lend our support to that endeavour.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2010/562). We welcome the participation in today's Security Council meeting of the Foreign Minister of Serbia, Mr. Jeremić. We share the assessments contained in his statement.

We carefully listened to the statement by Mrs. Çitaku. We are disappointed by the unwarranted views that she has expressed, which run counter to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Russia supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia. We are of the view that it is undeniable that resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in effect and remains the international legal basis for a Kosovo settlement that is binding upon all. Our position remains unchanged in respect to that resolution, that is, we do not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

We believe that it is important for the stakeholders to resume dialogue in order to bring about a settlement of the Kosovo issue. Here, we cannot condone unilateral actions of Pristina and the international presence in northern Kosovo that are aimed at changing realities on the ground in order to impact the modalities and outcomes of the dialogue ahead.

In that regard, we are concerned over the growing activity of the Kosovo Albanian authorities north of the Ibar river, and their plans, despite the negative view of UNMIK on those plans, to build and restore destroyed homes on land that is adjacent to Serbian towns, as well as their plans to open a court without the consent of the United Nations Administration in Mitrovica or of the Serbian city council in northern Mitrovica.

The situation continues to be unsatisfactory with respect to the return to Kosovo of internally displaced persons, including Serbian citizens. There are many reasons for that, including the fact that returnees are not confident about their security, nor are the rights of return encouraged by actions such as those by the Kosovo defence and security entities when, on 26 September, they removed transmitters of the Serbian telecom company in the Serbian-populated areas of Kosovo.

As a result of this, almost all the enclaves to the north of the Ibar River have been left without mobile communications and some without landline communications. We believe that that is a blatant violation of human rights as part of an unfair competitive struggle. We believe that such intent is fraught with additional tension in terms of security in Kosovo and could spark growing mistrust of the Serbian population with respect to the readiness of the peacekeeping force to carry out its duties. This step should also be seen as premature in the light of the incidents, described today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, that occurred in the town of Peć during the enthronement ceremony of the Serbian Patriarch.

The attempts of the Kosovo media to discredit UNMIK are unacceptable. The campaign against UNMIK jeopardizes its staff's security and prevents the Mission from carrying out its functions. We insist that UNMIK carry out its duties with respect to the external representation of Kosovo in regional and international organizations and mechanisms. Attempts to secure Pristina's participation in international events as a sovereign State are unacceptable. In that respect, we maintain our position that the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, on basis of its mandate from the Security Council, must play as active a role as possible in assisting the process of a Kosovo settlement. We insist on the need to maintain the leading role of the Security Council in resolving the issue of Kosovo, as it remains the guarantor of compliance with international law, the United Nations Charter and its own decisions.

Information on the substance and proceedings of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina should be reflected in the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNMIK, with reports of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo attached thereto.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Lamberto Zannier,

Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing. I also welcome Mr. Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and thank him for his statement. I also thank Mrs. Çitaku for her presentation.

Allow me to make the following comments. My delegation notes with satisfaction the reasonably calm security situation in Kosovo, although the situation in northern Kosovo remains unstable. Security incidents continue to cause concern and tensions. My country therefore calls on all parties to exercise self-restraint and to avoid any unilateral or provocative action that could increase tension. At the same time, we believe that the vigilance of the security forces, work to achieve reconciliation and the prosecution of those who commit violent acts play an important role in spreading a sense of security among all citizens, especially those of the northern Kosovo.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between the various communities and encourage it to pursue those efforts. Lebanon appreciates UNMIK's efforts to maintain security and stability and to facilitate Kosovo's participation in various international and regional forums. However, we share the Secretary-General's concern over the report issued by the "Office for Implementation of the Strategy for the North of Kosovo" and the media campaign against UNMIK. We call on all parties to abstain from publishing inaccurate information, which can only have detrimental effects and create obstacles to UNMIK's work.

We welcome the regular exchange of information and coordination between the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and UNMIK, pursuant to the principle of neutrality set out in resolution 1244 (1999).

A study conducted by UNICEF has highlighted the fact that current return and repatriation practices lack guarantees for safe and dignified returns. We therefore stress the importance of the organic link between national reconciliation and the strengthening of economic and development activities in the various communities, and of respect for human rights. Only this will end discrimination and harassment, thus creating a socio-economic environment conducive to the return of the refugees.

Moreover, we express our appreciation for the progress made by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission in protecting Serbian Orthodox religious and cultural heritage sites in Kosovo. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that technical support and funding be provided to the Commission.

We welcome cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina on the issue of missing persons through the Working Group on Missing Persons. We hope that this spirit of cooperation will also extend to other fields.

We also welcome General Assembly resolution 64/298, presented by Serbia to the Assembly and adopted on 9 September. In our view, the resolution constitutes an important point of departure for the launching of a flexible and constructive dialogue between the two parties as soon as possible. It is encouraging in this respect that the United Nations and the European Union have expressed their intention to facilitate such a dialogue. However, it is extremely important that all parties of influence also make continuous efforts to re-establish trust and promote reconciliation between the communities of Kosovo. That will create an atmosphere of trust for the adoption of agreements of mutual benefit to all communities.

We hope that the recent political incidents and the anticipated early elections will not delay dialogue between the parties and the elections will be fair and transparent. In addition, we hope that the dialogue will help to improve the living conditions of the people and help to strengthen the basis for peace and reconciliation in Kosovo, thus contributing to stability in the region.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for his briefing. I welcome His Excellency Mr. Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, to this debate and thank him for his statement. I also thank Mrs. Çitaku for her statement.

Uganda commends the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for its continued efforts in promoting security and stability in Kosovo and the region, particularly with regard to continued coordination activities with relevant actors and developing common approaches to the maintenance of peace and stability on the ground. We are encouraged that the overall security situation in Kosovo during the reporting period remained relatively calm.

We are concerned, however, by the recurrent clashes in northern Kosovo between Kosovo Serbs and

Kosovo Albanians, which increase instability and division between the communities. We urge all sides to exercise restraint in order to avoid further escalation of tensions.

We commend UNMIK for its proactive engagement with all communities, as well as the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade and international actors in furthering peace and stability in Kosovo. We are convinced that UNMIK's work in supporting minority communities, encouraging reconciliation, facilitating dialogue and regional cooperation is critical.

My delegation welcomes the cooperation and coordination between UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) on issues of mutual concern. This cooperation is vital, and we encourage that it be strengthened within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999). The Kosovo Force (KFOR) plays an important complementary role in maintaining an overall safe environment. In this regard, we salute the efforts of UNMIK, in coordination with EULEX and KFOR, in encouraging both sides to find a sustainable and peaceful solution.

We commend UNMIK for facilitating the activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including inter-communal meetings, technical assessments of cultural heritage sites and the implementation of projects engaging Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. These activities are important because they build confidence and create a better understanding among communities. We therefore encourage UNMIK to continue, in coordination and cooperation with local and relevant international actors, its efforts to address critical social services needs.

UNMIK is also playing an important role in facilitating the work of the Reconstruction Implementation Commission. It is important that the Commission be availed the necessary financial and logistical support to complete its work.

We welcome the progress made so far regarding the return of displaced persons and the complementary role place by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It is essential in the spirit of reconciliation for recipient communities to desist in any actions which may hinder inter-communal integration. It is also important for both sides to devote more resources towards the location of missing persons.

Regional cooperation plays an important role in enhancing development. We therefore encourage the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade to work together in pursuit of this goal. We call on the international community to continue supporting UNMIK's important work, consistent with resolution 1244 (1999).

Finally, we commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zannier, and the staff of UNMIK for their good work.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I, too, would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and to thank him for his statement. I also thank Special Representative Lamberto Zannier for his briefing and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for her remarks.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/562) depicts a scenario of rising ethnic tensions, especially in the north of Kosovo. Multiple clashes between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians and attacks on places of worship and persons from minority communities are expressions of a situation that requires the attention of the Security Council. Current tensions also reveal the depth of the mistrust and prejudice that communities and individuals still have to overcome.

In such an atmosphere, it is imperative that all authorities in Kosovo provide for the security of all persons, regardless of their ethnic origin or religion. All parties must also refrain from any acts that can create further instability. Building a truly diverse and tolerant Kosovo should be a common goal pursued by all.

My delegation deplores the publication by Pristina authorities of an inaccurate report on the administration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) of Mitrovica, which fuelled a damaging media campaign against the Mission. UNMIK was established by the Security Council and challenges to the Mission's authority are a clear violation of resolution 1244 (1999).

We also remain concerned by the Secretary-General's assessment that relations between the Mission and Pristina continue to be at arm's length. We reiterate our call for both Belgrade and Pristina to cooperate actively with UNMIK and Special Representative Zannier, especially in advancing practical arrangements that may benefit the ordinary citizen.

As resolution 1244 (1999) remains in force, it continues to be the main parameter for the presence of

the United Nations in Kosovo and all those who operate there under the overall authority of UNMIK. The resolution also continues to offer the basis for settling outstanding disputes through negotiations with a view to reaching a legitimate solution under the auspices of the Security Council, consistent with its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore reiterate our call to the parties to resume negotiations on all outstanding issues as soon as possible and to cooperate with each other in good faith. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the willingness of the European Union to facilitate dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, as acknowledged by the General Assembly on 9 September 2010 (General Assembly resolution 64/298). We hope both parties will take full advantage of this opportunity.

I also welcome the Secretary-General's intention to keep the Security Council informed of developments in the dialogue supported by the European Union. A solution to the dispute in Kosovo is a matter of concern not only to the parties themselves but to the international community as a whole.

Mr. Onowu (Nigeria): We would also like to thank Mr. Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Çitaku for their statements. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zannier, for his informative briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/562) and appreciate the progress made since the last report. In particular, we note that the overall security situation in Kosovo has remained calm, although there are still pockets of violent incidents. We are encouraged by the continued cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina on the problem of missing persons. It is also positive that implementation of the United Nations Strategic Framework for Kosovo is under way.

We acknowledge the contribution of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in collaboration with regional and international actors in facilitating the progress that has been made in Kosovo. In particular, UNMIK's role in the rule of law and coordination among the various actors, as well as in facilitating dialogue among the communities, continues to enjoy our strong support. We also appreciate its role in fostering cordial relations with all the major actors in the region.

The situation in northern Kosovo remains a cause for concern. Increasing political tensions and recurring incidents and attacks of a political nature have continued to raise the perception of insecurity in Kosovo and undermine efforts to promote the stability and development of Kosovo and the region. The Secretary-General's concerns about the absence of significant progress in reconciliation between the communities, as well as the consistently low number of returns, are issues that deserve continued attention. In this regard, we urge for greater efforts to be made to help build confidence among the communities and lead to the consolidation of peace, stability and reconciliation in Kosovo and the region.

There is also a need to improve security conditions and develop reintegration projects that will encourage voluntary and safe returns. We are particularly concerned about the lack of support to the activities of UNMIK in the north. At this critical stage, Kosovo more than ever needs the continued presence of UNMIK in the territory. We are convinced that its effective engagement with all the parties to promote reconciliation and stability will bolster progress in other areas of difficulty. We therefore call on all actors to provide the necessary support to enable UNMIK to fulfil its mandate.

We are strongly convinced of the importance of dialogue in resolving the difficult issues relating to Kosovo. In this regard, we urge the international community to remain focused on Kosovo, especially by promoting peace efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive and mutually acceptable solution to issues in the territory and the region.

It is gratifying to note the efforts of the European Union in facilitating a process of dialogue between the parties. This is a major step forward. We urge the parties to seize the possibilities that it offers. It is also important, however, to ensure that any process involves close consultation and coordination between all relevant actors, and takes into account the specific circumstances and concerns of all the communities.

In conclusion, we commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team for their unrelenting efforts in promoting peace and stability in Kosovo and the region.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Kosovo situation has a bearing on peace, security and stability in Europe as a whole, as well as in the Balkans in particular. The overall security situation in Kosovo is relatively calm at present, but tension in the north remains a cause for concern. China hopes that the parties concerned will exercise restraint, work together to maintain stability in the north and avoid the escalation of tensions.

We welcome the cooperation between the parties concerned, with the assistance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), on the issue of missing persons and religious and cultural heritage sites. China hopes that all parties will take concrete measures to promote reconciliation between all of Kosovo's communities and protect the rights and interests of Kosovar Serbs and other minorities.

China calls for efforts to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups, in particular efforts to provide education and health services for children.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and appreciates the commitment and efforts of the Government and people of Serbia to achieve lasting peace, stability and development.

We continue to believe that the best approach to the settlement of the Kosovo issue is for both parties to negotiate a mutually acceptable solution within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains in effect and is still the legal basis on which solutions can be found to the Kosovo issue. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice does not stand in the way of the parties seeking a proper solution through negotiations.

China supports UNMIK in continuing to fulfil its responsibilities, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are concerned about acts and speech that might endanger the safety and security of United Nations personnel. We urge all the parties concerned to continue their cooperation with UNMIK to ensure its smooth functioning.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his briefing. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign affairs of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, and that of Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Mexico recognizes the important work carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the entities, fund and programmes of the United Nations and the strategic partners.

We welcome the approval of the United Nations Strategic Framework for Kosovo, as this instrument will contribute to the planning and consistency of international efforts aimed at reconstruction and development in the region.

My delegation believes it extremely important that the international community continue to support the presence of UNMIK so that it is able to comply with its mandate in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). We call upon the parties to cooperate with UNMIK and to avoid any actions that could affect the presence of the Mission or endanger its personnel.

We welcome the cooperation between UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Kosovo Force, the international security force there. The cooperation between UNMIK and EULEX is particularly important for promoting the rule of law in Kosovo, particularly in strengthening judicial and human rights institutions.

We note with concern the increase in acts of inter-ethnic violence in the northern part of Kosovo, particularly between young people, since the International Court of Justice issued its advisory opinion on 22 July with regard to the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo.

My delegation would like to reaffirm the importance of the Security Council reiterating to the parties their obligation to respect international law and to avoid any acts of provocation that could lead to an increase of tension or exacerbate the differences between the communities. It is important that we maintain the positive momentum for dialogue following the adoption, on 9 September, of resolution 64/298 by the General Assembly.

We call for constructive dialogue that would lead to peacebuilding, stability and reconciliation in Kosovo while making use of the support and cooperation provided by the European Union, in conformity with the General Assembly resolution to which I have just referred.

The delegation of Mexico believes it crucial to increase the cooperation of UNMIK with Pristina and Belgrade in matters relating to investigations into missing persons, the reconstruction of religious and cultural heritage sites and support to minority communities in the provision of public and civil services.

The United Nations team in Kosovo should strengthen its cooperation with regional and local organizations in order to undertake actions aimed at promoting reconciliation, tolerance and solidarity between communities, particularly children and young people. It is alarming to see how vulnerable children belonging to repatriated minority communities are. They live in poverty and have high dropout rates from school and insufficient access to health care services. This is also true for children with special needs or chronic illnesses. We call on the parties to promote conditions that allow for the secure and voluntary return, free from discrimination, of those who wish to do so.

It is important to promote the strengthening of programmes for reintegration and development, as well as for the construction and rebuilding of housing.

We consider it important that UNMIK work closely together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, local institutions and other humanitarian bodies on the ground in order to achieve those objectives, particularly bearing in mind the planned repatriation of thousands of families from minority communities that are living in other countries in Europe.

Finally, my delegation would like to stress the need for the parties and countries in the region to cooperate with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in order to fight the impunity of those responsible for serious crimes committed in the past, thus promoting peace, justice and national reconciliation.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Allow me to extend a warm to Mr. Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo. We are pleased to see both of them, and we thank them for their statements. I would also like to welcome Mr. Lamberto Zannier and thank him for his comprehensive briefing. We appreciate and support the work the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is doing towards promoting security, stability and the protection of human rights under his leadership.

We are pleased to note that the overall security situation in Kosovo remains generally calm, with the exception of northern Kosovo, where, unfortunately, a certain number of inter-ethnic clashes occurred. We strongly condemn all ethnic violence and see these acts as attacks against the peace and security of all the citizens of Kosovo. As such, we urge all sides to refrain from escalating tensions, especially in northern Kosovo, and stress the importance of continuing cooperation with UNMIK.

We also call on the authorities of Kosovo, particularly local-level institutions and the Kosovo police, to make sure that they continue to take all the necessary measures to prevent violent incidents, with a special emphasis on those affecting minority communities.

We attach great importance to the early elections next month being conducted in an orderly and inclusive manner in Kosovo, thus allowing all the citizens of Kosovo to decide on the future of their country. We believe those elections will further contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law in Kosovo.

At our last meeting on the subject, I underlined that, as one of the first countries that recognized Kosovo as an independent State, we welcome the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate any applicable rule of international law.

We also welcome the recent General Assembly resolution 64/298, jointly sponsored by Serbia and the European Union countries, acknowledging the advisory opinion of the Court and expressing the readiness of the European Union to facilitate dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. It is our sincere hope that that advisory opinion will open a new phase in relations between Pristina and Belgrade. Both are close friends and partners. We are confident that the dialogue will be based on the Court's advisory opinion and that the General Assembly resolution will make important contributions to sustainable peace, security and stability in the Balkans.

We recognize that there are still problems on the path towards reconciliation. The problem posed by the issue of missing persons and the challenges encountered

in the returns process in that respect cannot be overlooked. Still, we are glad to see that with UNMIK facilitation, Belgrade and Pristina continue to cooperate on this issue through the Working Group on Missing Persons.

Lasting peace and stability in the Balkans remains our ultimate and overriding goal. As we stated in yesterday's debate (6421st meeting), we hope that the general improvement of relations between the countries of the region, illustrated by the reciprocal visits and statements, will also have a positive impact on the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

The preservation of Kosovo's territorial integrity and sovereignty is essential for complete stability in the Balkans, as well as for the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. In that respect, Kosovo should not be left isolated in the middle of Europe, and the continued support of the international community to Kosovo in such fields as the consolidation of democratic institutions, rule of law and the fight against corruption is needed. We are strongly committed to Kosovo living in peace with its neighbours and participating in regional cooperation in every aspect.

At the same time, Serbia, as an important player in the region, can do much for the consolidation of peace, democracy and prosperity in the Balkans and the greater European space. We welcome and support the developing relations between Serbia and the European Union. The future of Kosovo also lies in its integration into European structures. Accordingly, we believe that that European perspective provides a sound basis for cooperation and dialogue.

As indicated by our Prime Minister during his recent visit to Kosovo, Turkey also stands ready to assist Pristina and Belgrade. While such efforts are under way, as the Secretary-General emphasizes in his report (S/2010/562), it is imperative that the parties avoid any unilateral steps that could derail the path towards dialogue.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2010/562). Also, we express our appreciation to Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the recent developments in Kosovo, and we commend the staff of the United Nations Mission for their hard work and dedication. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, as well as of Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Bosnia and Herzegovina commends the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), operating within the framework of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), aimed at implementing its mandate of maintaining peace, security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. Furthermore, we appreciate UNMIK's contribution to the reconciliation process, facilitation of constructive dialogue and regional cooperation, as well as its focus on mediation between the communities and its support to minority communities.

We also have taken positive note that the security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively calm during the reporting period, despite some incidents, mainly in northern Kosovo, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. Developments such as the International Court of Justice advisory opinion triggered particular tensions in an already sensitive and politically delicate atmosphere.

As for the Court's advisory opinion, we welcome General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010. Bosnia and Herzegovina extended its full support to the adoption of that resolution, sponsored by Serbia and the 27 member States of the European Union. It calls for the initiation of a process of dialogue between the parties, a dialogue that would help promote cooperation and achieve progress on the path to the European Union.

We consider that the efforts to improve inter-community dialogue and confidence-building among the parties are of particular importance in creating an environment conducive to sustainable return. Nonetheless, the number of voluntary minority returns during the reporting period remains low. We commend UNMIK and other United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for their efforts to defuse tensions and draw attention to the common needs of returnees and internally displaced persons and encourage them to continue their work.

Having in mind how important strengthening the rule of law is, we stress the significance and welcome the activities of UNMIK, as well as those of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), operating within the status-neutral framework

of the United Nations to that end. We also support the existing practice of cooperation and coordination between UNMIK, EULEX, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO — the latter present through the Kosovo Force troops — and express our hope that that practice will continue. Furthermore, in light of our strong commitment and support to the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), we find the reported strong cooperation between EULEX and the ICTY encouraging.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that stability and security in Kosovo are important for achieving lasting peace and prosperity in our region. We also believe that the international community should continue to play an important role in supporting the aspirations of the region's countries with regard to their integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. For their part, the countries of the region should cooperate fully with the international community if those goals are to be achieved.

I cannot conclude without emphasizing that promoting good relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries is among the top priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy.

Mr. Issoze-Ngondet (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): As we reiterate our congratulations to you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council this month, we would also like to express our appreciation to you for the holding of today's debate, which gives us another opportunity to address the developments in the situation in Kosovo. We would also like to thank Mr. Lamberto Zannier for presenting both clearly and briefly the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/562) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We once again reiterate to him and the staff of UNMIK our unwavering support for their efforts on the ground in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

Lastly, we welcome the presence in the Chamber of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and thank him for his statement. We share his views, both in terms of the prospects for dialogue with Kosovo and with respect to resolution 1244 (1999). We note from Mrs. Çitaku's statement her acceptance of the offer of dialogue made by the European Union.

On 9 September, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 64/298 on Kosovo, sponsored by Serbia and member States of the European Union. The text of the resolution is historic, as it offers new prospects for dialogue and cooperation between Pristina and Belgrade, with a view to achieving lasting peace in the Balkans region. We should like to commend the central role played by the European Union in facilitating this dialogue, so necessary to reconciliation between the various communities living in Kosovo. Since dialogue is so essential to any process of settling a crisis, we urge all parties to take this new opportunity to jointly seek solutions to the problems hindering peace, security and stability in this region.

We welcome the latest developments in Kosovo, in particular the recent implementation of the Strategic Framework for Kosovo and the launch, this December, of the common development plan of the United Nations Kosovo team. Along these lines, the results of the Reconstruction Implementation Commission, with respect to cultural and religious heritage sites, seem to be a genuine factor in effective cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina.

This progress does, unfortunately, present a contrast to some of the realities on the ground. As the report of the Secretary-General rightly points out, reconciliation between the various communities in Kosovo is confronting serious challenges. The situation is worsened by escalating tensions in northern Kosovo. We therefore call on all parties to refrain from taking any unilateral action that could contribute to worsening tensions and jeopardize the prospects for dialogue that have emerged from General Assembly resolution 64/298.

The recent statements by Kosovar authorities against the presence of UNMIK in northern Kosovo seem very worrying. They could, in certain cases, have an impact on the security situation for United Nations staff, whose mission of neutrality is an integral part of promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo.

We would like to conclude by reiterating our position, which is founded on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia — prerequisites for any constructive search for a settlement of the question of Kosovo. We encourage the parties to continue to address the outstanding issues through dialogue and cooperation. Gabon believes that

the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/64/881) should help to promote such prospects.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank, for their presence here and for their briefings, Mr. Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo. I would of course also like to commend the work of Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as that of all members of his Mission.

Almost three years after Kosovo's independence, the institutions of this young country continue to be consolidated. Democracy is under way. The vote, on 2 November, of no confidence in the Government has led to the organization of early parliamentary elections, which are expected to take place on 12 December. We see that the political climate is allowing everyone to express himself. We therefore hope that the elections will permit democratic institutions to be strengthened even further. In that context, we regret the calls to boycott the elections. We urge everyone to support this democratic process, in the interests of all the communities of Kosovo.

Since our last debate, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution (General Assembly resolution 64/298) that acknowledges the consequences of the advisory opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice (see A/64/881), requested by Serbia, with regard to the question of the conformity with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo.

In taking note of this opinion, according to which the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate any applicable rule of international law, the General Assembly therefore brought closure to a debate that had weighed heavily on the political life of both countries. Serbia received an answer to the question it had asked. A chapter has been closed and a new one, of dialogue between the two States, must now begin.

The European Union has offered to facilitate dialogue between the Republics of Serbia and Kosovo, and the General Assembly has welcomed this initiative. It should begin as soon as possible, and should touch on various subjects that directly concern the lives of the peoples by promoting cooperation between the two countries.

For its part, Serbia continues to make progress on the road to European rapprochement. On 25 October, the 27 Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union decided to entrust to the European Commission the examination of Serbia for candidacy for Union membership. France, which has strongly supported this positive development, welcomes this development.

On the ground, as the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2010/562), the situation is relatively calm. Although we welcome the improvement in the general climate, France strongly condemns all violence, whoever the victims and perpetrators may be. It is important that the Kosovo authorities, supported by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, pursue the perpetrators of these crimes and step up their efforts in this area.

Kosovo must continue to focus on its fundamental priorities and to make progress towards establishing the rule of law and good governance for the benefit of all its communities. We hope that this will be the chief goal that the next Government sets itself.

France will continue to pay great attention to the situation in Kosovo and to promote dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and their joint and shared European future.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): I thank Special Representative Lamberto Zannier for his comprehensive briefing. Of course, I would like to join previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić of Serbia and Acting Foreign Minister Vlora Çitaku of Kosovo. Japan highly values the contributions of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to ensuring the stability of Kosovo and the Western Balkan region as a whole.

Japan welcomes the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 64/298 regarding the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 22 July. We appreciate the flexibility shown by all concerned parties towards its adoption. We hope that a direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade will follow, addressing issues that affect the everyday lives

of all the people in the communities of Kosovo. It is equally important that the dialogue should build confidence and contribute to rapprochement between Pristina and Belgrade.

As the Secretary-General aptly states in his report, this dialogue will "open a new phase" (*S/2010/562, para. 57*). We expect that the European Union will facilitate the dialogue so that the entire region can be stabilized irreversibly through its path to integration with Europe. We hope that the recent political ferment in Kosovo will not delay the launch of the dialogue. We also hope that the new administration will be established very soon. It is also important that free and fair elections be held with the participation of all eligible residents, including minorities.

We commend Kosovo's efforts to improve its State capacity. As previous speakers have noted, one example of this is the handover of responsibility from KFOR to the Kosovo Police for the protection of some Serbian Orthodox monasteries, as the Secretary-General's report states. As for the humanitarian situation, including the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, we are particularly concerned about the stagnancy in the process of reintegration of minority returnees. As a proponent of the policy of human security, Japan continues to support the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other institutions to promote peaceful multi-ethnic coexistence and sustainable development through various frameworks.

The President: I shall now make a brief statement in my national capacity.

I join other Council members in thanking Mr. Jeremić and Mrs. Çitaku for attending this afternoon's debate. I would also like to thank Mr. Zannier for his detailed briefing and for his hard work and leadership. I also thank the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo for the role that it continues to play in promoting stability and reconciliation in Kosovo, and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force for their important work.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2010/562) rightly highlights progress in a number of areas, including the closure of the Česmin Lug camp near Mitrovica. This is a particularly welcome step towards the reintegration of the Kosovo Roma and will improve the living and health conditions of the affected families. The United Kingdom also welcomes the cooperation among Belgrade, Pristina and the international missions in Kosovo in making arrangements for the enthronement of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch in Peć, and the prompt action of the Kosovo Police against those suspected of violence against pilgrims. The report also draws our attention to areas of concern, such as the trend of targeting Serbs working for Kosovo Government institutions and a number of small but violent incidents in northern Kosovo.

During the period covered by the report, the International Court of Justice published on 22 July its advisory opinion on Kosovo's declaration of independence, stating that the declaration did not violate international law. On 9 September, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 64/298, presented by Serbia and European Union member States, which welcomed the prospect of a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, to be facilitated by the European Union. We call on Serbia and Kosovo to take advantage of this opportunity for both countries to put their differences over status to one side and move forward on cooperation over practical matters. I am encouraged that both Mr. Jeremić and Mrs. Çitaku underlined in their comments today that they will look to the future, not to the past, in embarking on that dialogue.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.